



Grand Canyon University

Don't Miss a Day of Your Future!™

3300 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85017 602.589.2300 Toll Free 800.800.9776 www.gcu.edu

The Scholarship Essay: Writing for Success

Getting Started

Many scholarships go unused because students dread writing yet another essay, which often feels like an additional assignment. The most difficult part of the writing process is getting started. With planning and organization, what seemed to be difficult is easy. This is an opportunity to share learning and skills that have been polished over the last twelve years!

Who Is Your Audience

As with any piece of writing, define the audience (reader) and the purpose. What are the reasons that the organization (history) offers scholarships money? If the scholarship is named after someone, can a personal connection be made to the person or organization? What is the mission of the funding organization? Write your essay for the audience in mind.

Define The Essay Requirements

Each scholarship essay may be asking you to focus your writing on a topic but ultimately the reader (audience) wants to know about YOU. Some scholarship essays may require reading a book or research. Other times, the essay may be more personal. How many parts are there to the prompt? Make sure all parts of the question are answered.

Take Time to Review Scholarship Essay Samples

Review Scholarship essay samples

<http://www.collegescholarships.com/>

Prewriting

Take the time to put your thoughts and ideas onto paper before writing the formal essay. Students may develop an outline, free write or jot down ideas and support.

Writing The Essay

- Show don't tell—The reader of the essay should have a clear picture of each description or example. Don't just say "I came from a low-income household." SHOW - "Because my parent/s earn less than what is needed to support a family, my brother and I work after school and study on the bus."
- Present tense only - The use of present tense tends to draw the reader in and gives them a picture of you currently.
- Use concise word choice—Choose adjectives and adverbs that add interest to the writing. "I really like books" or "I am an avid reader." Both convey the same thing but one is more interesting. Often concise word choice eliminates the danger of being wordy.
- Make the introduction inviting (the hook) - This is a chance to make a good first impression. Do not make the introduction a summary of the essay; make it a way to get the attention of the reader.
- Transitions to create a map—Avoid using the basic transitions when connecting thoughts and ideas from paragraph to paragraph (first, second, finally, ect). Use transition sentences as way to map the essay and connect one paragraph to the next. "Working and attending school does teach me to organize time, but community involvement and volunteering is my passion."
- Develop a compelling conclusion—The conclusion should not repeat phrases in the body of the essay. Wrap up the essay by restating the point and saying it different.
- Peer edit—Take a day away from the writing and allow a friend, family member or teacher the opportunity to edit the paper.
- Final Revision—Always revise work before the final submission. Often writers have many drafts. Keep in mind that revising a paper is changing a few things and only a few keystrokes!

The Assignment

Research scholarships online (many search engines were given in the presentation). Choose one scholarship with an essay component and do the prewriting, essay, edit and final revision. Your essay must be turned in with the original scholarship question.

Points Possible _____

Due Date _____